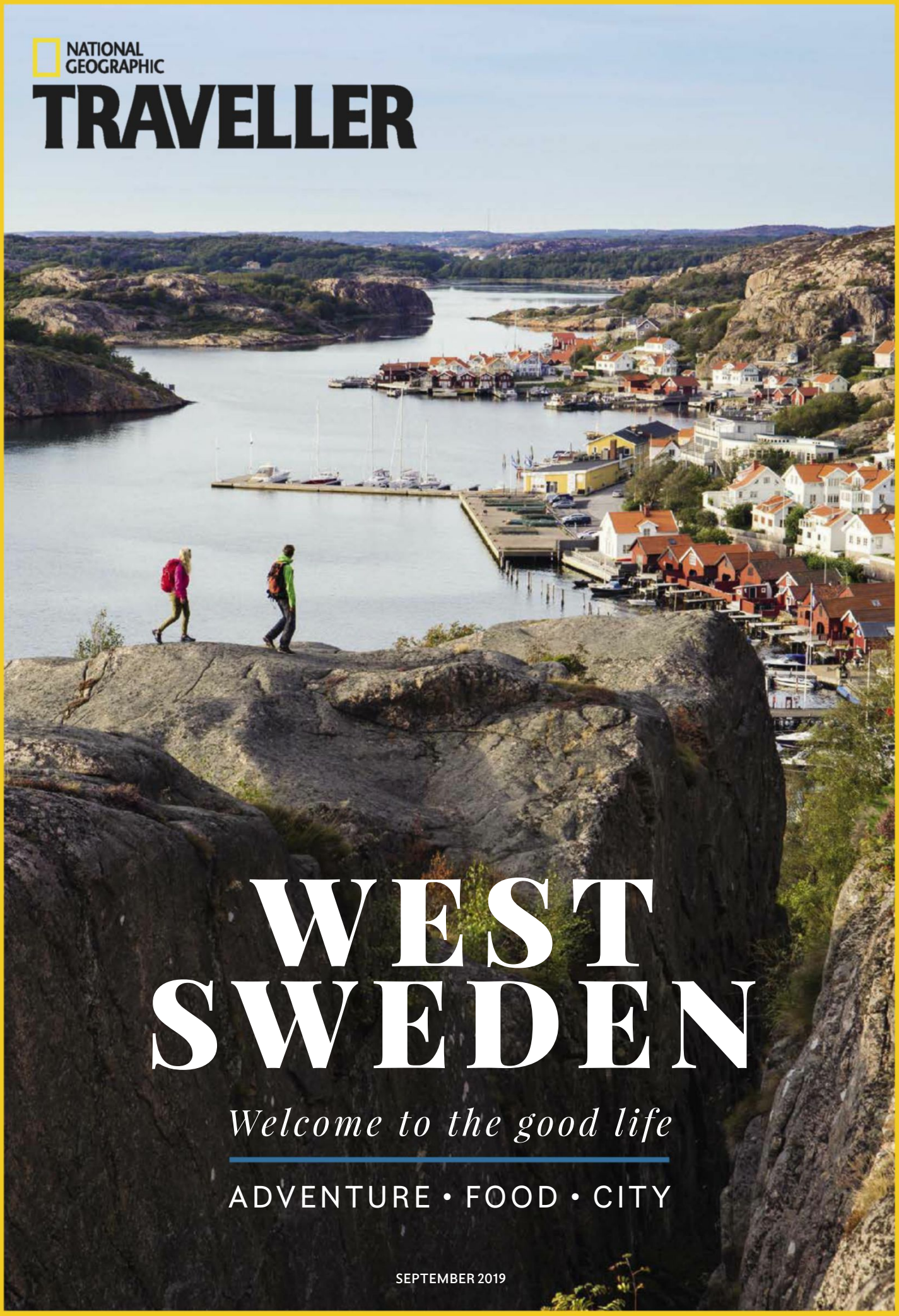
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
TRAVELLER
WEST SWEDEN
Welcome to the good life
ADVENTURE • FOOD • CITY
SEPTEMBER 2019

ILLUSTRATION: NIK NEVES

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELLER

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abc PPA recycle

Editor's letter

There was a very specific moment when West Sweden's embrace of 'the good life' came into focus for me. This moment, like most of my worthwhile epiphanies, happened in bed.

The difference was this bed was in a tiny wooden cabin with a glass ceiling and walls, and I was watching the sun set over Lake Laxsjön from under the covers, having spent the morning hiking through the emerald forests of Dalsland. My mind was calm, my body was tired and I felt truly relaxed for the first time in months.

As I watched the dying sunbeams threading through the leaves of the oak tree overhead, I realised I was firmly in the moment and actively happy. A small epiphany, perhaps, but it felt momentous at the time.

West Sweden is full of these opportunities for unassuming, enriching experiences. In this guide, we highlight some of the best: from kayaking on a seafood safari adventure (p.6) to tucking into the culinary prospects of the region (p.10). We then head to the bright lights of Gothenburg to explore the city's culture, nightlife and architecture (p.26).

ZANE HENRY, EDITOR

@zanehenry

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ON THE COVER:
Walk in Fjällbacka // Roger Borgelid

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BOHUSLÄN

Home to one of the most striking stretches of coastline in the world, Bohuslän province in West Sweden is made for adventure. Visitors can thread their way between the 8,000 islands and islets of the archipelago in a kayak, hike through the ocean spray misting nature reserve trails, and cycle past charming fishing villages and outdoor artworks

PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BORGELID

EDGE OF THE WORLD

Exploring the islands along West Sweden's Bohuslän Coast by kayak and fishing boat provides a vivid perspective of the region's culture and adventurous spirit

WORDS: JOSEPHINE PRICE

Marcus is pointing to the horizon, talking passionately about the bounty of the seas surrounding us. His pontification is becoming more enthusiastic as the light falls in curtains through the clouds, and I nod in agreement, unable to reply with a mouth full of prawns. We're perched on the edge of the world, discussing the good things in life, while feasting on some of the finest seafood soup I've ever had. It's an extravagantly rarefied meal, without a starched tablecloth or hovering waiter in sight.

Marcus, Ingela — owners of Skärgårdsidyllen, a kayak and outdoor adventure company — and I are huddled together on a secluded rocky islet in the Bohuslän archipelago on Sweden's west coast. This is their favourite place to eat lunch, and today it's providing valuable shelter from the wind.

We survey the horizon. Over there is an island that's good for wild camping, they tell me. Just beyond it is a narrow channel between two islands that's great for a spot of kayak surfing. And there are many, many more. Over 8,000 islands, in fact. Some are mere rocks peeking out of the water, others are large and dotted with houses. The sea is peppered with them — each a unique opportunity to explore.

We spent the morning attempting to weave between the islands by kayak, but the previous night's storm played havoc with our plans. I was in a kayak with Marcus and despite us working as a team, my arms soon turned to jelly as we tried to battle through the choppy water. We eventually gave in and stopped for lunch. Our spread includes the aforementioned seafood soup along with some salty caviar spread, crusty hunks of bread, brie-like cheese, seaweed crackers and cinnamon buns, all washed down with local lagers. Seals pop their heads out of the water to check on proceedings from time to time, while opportunistic seagulls patrol overhead, keeping their beady eyes on any scraps that might fall their way.

Marcus and Ingela made the decision to leave the city with their young children for the crystalline waters and dark granite isles of the Bohuslän Coast back in 2008.

"Look. You see the water's green? That's from the sea shells," Marcus explains. We're deep in oyster country— a region that starts about 20 miles south of Grebbestad and stretches a further 20 miles north.

We slip the kayaks back into the water after lunch and continue on our adventure, discussing the local marine flora and fauna, and the growing problem with discarded plastic. The husband and wife team organises regular clean-ups to keep this stretch of the archipelago pristine. I ask what the locals do during the different fishing seasons. "During lobster season, we basically sleep in our wellies," Ingela tells me. "The mornings are a frantic rush to get out and get to sea in search of 'black gold'."

"We're perched on the edge of the world, discussing the good things in life, while feasting on some of the finest seafood soup I've ever had. It's an extravagantly rarefied meal, without a starched tablecloth or waiter in sight"

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
South Koster Island; kayaking in the Bohuslän archipelago; freshly cooked crayfish, Smögen

IMAGES: ROGER BORGELID; JONAS INGMAN

I'm keen to get a glimpse of the subaquatic treasure hunt. So the next morning, I head off to meet Lars and Per of Everts Sjöbod, two brothers who run seafood safaris from their 100-year-old boathouse.

It's good to be back on the water. Our vessel is a nine-metre wooden schooner that was built in 1952. An intelligent sonar system maps the seabed so the brothers can get some idea of where to put their traps, but that's the only technology they rely on. They grew up here, catching mackerel with their father as kids, and have an innate understanding of the sea.

I jump aboard for a 'lobster safari', which involves combing through the 40 pots the brothers have sitting on the seabed around this part of the Bohuslän archipelago.

"What's the boat called?" I ask. Per smiles: "*Tuffa*." I ask if it means something in particular in Swedish. "No, no — it's just what the boat does," he replies with a chuckle. He purses then blows out his lips — "Tuff, tuff, tuff!" — mimicking the noise of the engine as it drives the vessel and we rise and fall with the crested tide, bouncing on each powerful surge.

We launch into a punishing routine of heaving up traps, inspecting the contents, putting in fresh bait and then throwing them back into the sea. All the while, the brothers tell me about the seasons and how to read the waves. My arms ache like hell, but I'm keen not to let the side down.

In an instant, my tiredness vanishes — I spot a snapping claw amid the bustle of black netting. Lars hauls it out of the pot and grabs the silver measuring tool. The crustaceans have to be at least 3.5 inches-long from eye to tail to be viable. We're in luck. Black gold.

We cheer, united in triumph. Lars points to a spot far beyond the nearest islands: "We have pots out there, too, but not today." I'm so tired, I concede it's for the best.

On the way back to shore, I look out across the archipelago. For a moment I'm tempted to head back out — to slip over the lip of the horizon and drop off the edge of the world.

SKÄRGÅRDSIDYLLEN offers kayaking and paddleboarding experiences. *skargardsidyllen.se*
EVERTS SJÖBOD conducts seafood safaris, fishing trips and boat adventures. *evertssjobod.se*
westsweden.com/paddling

Lobster safari in Grebbestad
RIGHT: Cycling in Lagunen camping sites

ISLAND HOPPING IN **BOHUSLÄN**

CHRIS DOYLE
Executive director of Europe & Central Asia, Adventure Travel Trade Association

WHAT MAKES THE WEST SWEDEN ARCHIPELAGO SPECIAL?
There's a relaxed atmosphere — a special sort of quiet — even during peak season, and plenty of nooks and crannies to explore. The archipelago has a dramatic, beautiful granite austerity and the relatively calm Kattegat Sea is ideal for watersports. The area around Uddevalla has plenty of good spots for camping, easy portages and dockings, and there are numerous small villages for food resupplies.

Before we had kids, my wife and I hiked, camped and island hopped our way around the islands just outside Gothenburg. They have well-developed cycling routes supported by a robust ferry system.

WHAT'S THE BEST ACTIVITY FOR ADVENTURERS?
There's kayaking, island hopping, hiking/trekking and cycling for the more active visitors, but the best thing about Bohouslän is how accessible it is. The hiking and walking on most islands is quite easy, even for people with physical limitations.

WHEN'S THE BEST TIME OF YEAR TO ISLAND HOP?
Any time! In summer, kayaking near midnight is still possible and you can check out all the midsummer celebrations. Winter brings dramatic landscapes set against the granite islands and steely sea. I'm an all-weather adventurer, so experiencing any given destination in every season is appealing to me.

IMAGES: ROGER BORGELID, JONAS INGMAN

BEST OF THE WEST

West Sweden has a wealth of activities for the adventurous, from island cycling to coastal hiking

WORDS: BABETTE-SCARLETT SCHOSSAU

Scenic cycling

West Sweden is a cyclist's paradise, with deep forests, open fields, narrow winding lanes, and a dramatic coastline ready to be explored on two wheels. Mountain biking in northern Bohuslän is a highlight, using Lagunen Camping & Cabins as a base from which to explore the granite rocks of the Kosterhavet National Park. Lagunen has also opened a new bike park — a playground for cyclists. *lagunen.se*
westsweden.com/cycling

Hit the slopes

From December through to late April, West Sweden transforms into a winter wonderland for skiers. The town of Ulricehamn is particularly popular for cross-country skiing, and has hosted the FIS Cross-Country World Cup twice. Mösseberg mountain's ski centre, Falköping Alpin, is located just 90 minutes from Gothenburg and is one of the most snow-sure spots in Sweden. Then, Skövde's Billingen mountain is a versatile option for experts and beginners alike.

Art on the go

Combine outdoor activity with some culture on an 'art adventure'. Kayak from the Nordic Watercolour Museum in Skärhamn, then hike or cycle to world-class outdoor park Pilane and enjoy an art tour that takes in sculptures such as a gigantic horn that can capture sonic waves from above the planet. 'The World's Sweatiest Art Trail' is well mapped-out and can be experienced in various sized segments. *pilane.org/en*

Make a run for it

West Sweden's Meet the Locals initiative offers visitors the chance to explore the region with the people who know it best. You can trail-run through the Änggårdsbergen nature reserve with adventurer Johan, or meet up with Lars and his dog Fanny for a ramble through the countryside around Alingsås. Many of the tours are free, and you can even arrange to stay at the homes of some of the locals. *meetthelocals.com*

Take action

Running from 3 August-1 September, West Sweden Action Weeks bring together a series of running, canoeing, cycling, swimming and roller-skiing races across the region. Highlights include the Island Race in Gothenburg's southern archipelago — the world's biggest swim-run event. Then there's the Icebug Xperience, an exciting trail-running race through the Bohuslän landscape. *westsweden.com/westswedenactionweeks*

PEACE OFFERING

Dalsland province is an oasis of deep lakes and emerald forests — a potent antidote to the stresses and strains of city life

WORDS: ZANE HENRY

Dalsland is just a two-hour flight from London — but feels light years away. I have dim memories of early starts, cramped trains and an overstuffed inbox, but they're floating away in the breeze. The air here is clean, there seem to be more lakes than people and I haven't been steamrollered by a single galloping pedestrian. After just a few hours in West Sweden, the vestiges of smog and stress are evaporating from my pores.

I'm kneeling on the Pilgrim's Path, trying to make eye contact with a sleepy little snake warming itself in the gentle May sunshine. The morning is crisp and full of spring, but the snake won't crack an eyelid. I give up, tiptoe past and set off again along the 60-mile trail — the same route pilgrims used to take all the way up to Trondheim in Norway to visit the tomb of St Olaf.

The most physically intense part of the hike is a climb up a steep hillside, across rocks made slippery by the light drizzle. When I get to the top, I'm short of breath, but it's worth it — I can see all the way across to Lake Vänern, Sweden's largest lake. This view is balm for my city-frazzled brain and it gives me a welcome sense of perspective. It's a true wilderness, this dramatically green province of forests and lakes.

A hush descends during the last part of the walk as the forest gets deeper and more tangled. It's all moss and leaves and the scent of fragrantly rotting wood. I've pulled my hood up against the rain, and the only sounds are my breath and the steady drip of water on the trees. There's a picnic bench just off the path that's covered in mossy velvet, slowly being claimed by the forest. The intense green of the trees seems to leach into the very air around me. I'm no pilgrim, but I feel the touch of the divine.

I've hiked only a tiny portion of the Pilgrim's Way, yet my legs are already aching. Fortunately, my evening promises to be considerably less taxing. I'm headed to the country manor of Baldersnäs Herrgård, where I'll check into the 72 Hour Cabin, a small custom-built wooden outhouse with glass walls and ceiling, nestled on the shore of Lake Laxsjon.

The cabin looks otherworldly in the twilight, the last glints of sunlight reflecting off its transparent walls. Settling in, I feel very exposed, with nowhere to hide from the great Swedish outdoors. As I draw the floor-length curtains, I realise I'm defeating the purpose. I draw a deep breath of clean, clean air, and open the curtains to let Dalsland into my room. The last rays of the sun bounce off the lake, through the glass and into the bed, and I'm lulled to sleep by the slow movement of the leaves above my head.

I wake to full-throated birdsong just before dawn, and watch the sun rise from my bed, 1,000 light years from home. Dalsland has let me in.

72 HOUR GLASS CABINS are available across Dalsland and West Sweden; at Baldersnäs, Henriksholm and Dalsland Aktiviteter. Includes access to basic amenities, essentials and equipment for activities. *72hcabin.com*

Hiking in Dalsland
TOP LEFT: Glass cabin, Henriksholm
RIGHT FROM TOP: Hiking through Ramvikslandet Nature Reserve; cycling along Göta Canal; Dyrön island

IMAGES: JONAS INGMAN; KATJA RAGNSTAM; ROGER BORGELID; JONATHAN FERNST; HENRIK TRYGG

OTHER LAND **ACTIVITIES**

1 HIKE THE SOTELEDEN TRAIL
This trail runs for 45 miles along beautiful forest, mountain and coastal scenery, and is divided into 20 sections, with easy access from different locations. Don't miss Ramvikslandet Nature Reserve, where you can climb the dramatic cliffs by the sea.

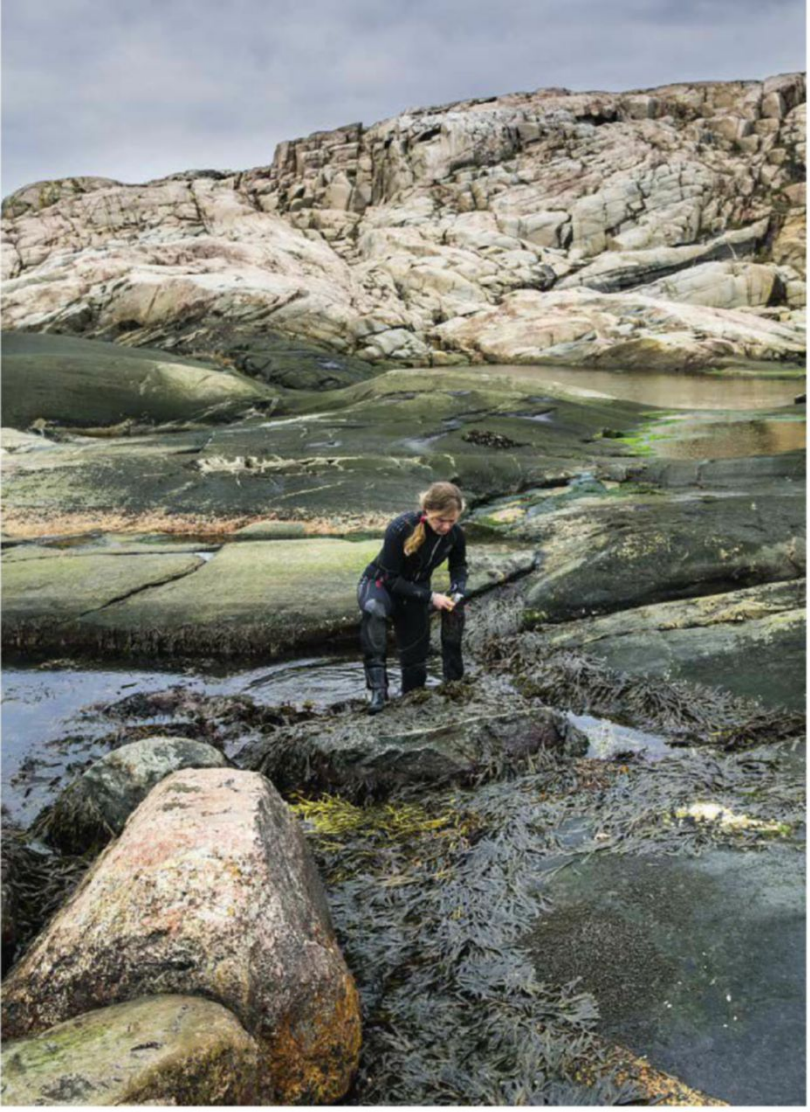
2 EXPLORE THE GÖTA CANAL
This canal stretches from Gothenburg in the west to Stockholm in the east. Enjoy a cruise aboard the *MS Juno* with tours of Karlsborg Fortress and the Viking city of Birka. Alternatively, set off on a day-long cycle of the towpath from Sjötorp to Hajstorp.

3 RAMBLE AROUND AN ISLAND
On Dyrön island in southern Bohuslän, you can wander among flocks of wild mouflon sheep before taking a dip at the sandy beach near the island's southern harbour. Later, head to the public sauna to relax while enjoying amazing sea views.

FISH, FORAGE & FIKA

Whether you're scouring the forest floor for chanterelles or kicking back with coffee and kanelbullar, a culinary trip to West Sweden is all about life's simple pleasures

WORDS: ZANE HENRY



Seaweed safari

Paddle out to sea in a kayak and get to grips with one of nature's superfoods: seaweed. The waters off the Bohuslän Coast are incredibly rich with it — the area is home to around 325 types, of which around 20 are edible, each with their own texture, characteristics and ideal food pairing. Catxcalot's seaweed safaris were launched to show just how delicious and versatile seaweed can be, while also showcasing the beauty of the Swedish coast.

WHY: Seaweed grows wildly and is loaded with nutrients and vitamins. The safaris focus on sustainability, with tips and tricks for harvesting seaweed in a way that's kind to the environment. You'll also be taught recipes for some easy, delicious dishes. Seaweed crisps, anyone?

WHERE: The waters off the Grebbestad archipelago on the Bohuslän Coast are sparkling, relatively calm and packed with varieties of seaweed.

WHEN: Dates are highly dependent on weather, so it's best to check in with the organisers.

WHO: *catxalot.se/en-GB*
nautopp.com

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Oysters from Grebbestad; foraging wild seaweed with Catxalot; harvested seaweed, Fjällbacka archipelago; snacking on homemade bread and edible seaweed

IMAGES: MADELEINE LANDLEY

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Preparing freshly foraged herbs at Gunnebo; Edible Country picnic table set up with a sea view at Ramsvikslandet; enjoying a communal Edible Country meal at Norrqvarn, along the Göta Canal; kayakers take a break for fika; traditional meatballs; Wrångebäck cheeses

The Edible Country

This new initiative turns the countryside itself into a gourmet restaurant while celebrating wild resources and championing sustainable cooking. Book one of the chic picnic tables available across the country, grab the cooking kit provided — along with a special recipe put together by a top Swedish chef — and set off into the wilderness. You'll forage for your own herbs, catch your own fish and cook everything over a portable stove in the great outdoors. Recipes on the menu include poached perch, forest broth and broiled herb butter.

WHY: Experience the joys of a woodland or lakeside walk while proving to yourself that you could survive in the wild. The concept forges a powerful link between the food we eat and where it comes from. And while you can do it solo, The Edible Country really comes alive as a shared experience, with friends or family sitting around the table together.

WHERE: The picnic tables are set up at a number of West Sweden's most scenic locations, including the peaceful banks of the Göta Canal, the boulders of Ramsvikslandet and the splendour of Gunnebo House.

WHEN: Available on Thursday-Saturday between May and September.

WHO: Book at *bookatable.com*. More details at *westsweden.com/ediblecountry*

Fika

Every day at around 3pm, Swedes across the country take a break from whatever they're doing to sit down with a steaming cup of coffee or tea and a biscuit, sandwich or kanelbulle (cinnamon bun) and just relax. Fika is the bedrock of Swedish social life, providing valuable opportunities to connect with people. There are some rules, though: no hot food, no alcohol and no bad vibes.

WHY: The ritual of slowing down to enjoy strong coffee, good company and beautiful surroundings is a central tenet to the West Swedish philosophy of appreciating the simple, unalloyed pleasures of life.

WHERE: The town of Alingsås in West Sweden — the self-appointed 'capital of fika' — is home to around 30 cafes and bakeries, some dating as far back as the 18th century. Gothenburg is also crammed with great spots, including Flickorna på Färjenäs, a dog-friendly cafe that offers treats for pups as well. Alternatively, take a packed lunch for a fika-on-the-go.

WHEN: It's popular year-round, but there's something special about rebelling against the elements with buttery cinnamon buns and piping hot coffee in the colder months.

WHO: Take a 90-minute guided fika tour of Alingsås, where you'll hit up the best cafes and delve deep into the history of the tradition. Email *turistbyran@alingsas.se*

THREE TO TRY

1 MEATBALLS
Arguably the best in Sweden, the *köttbullar* served at Smaka in Gothenburg are smothered in a creamy sauce and accompanied by tart lingonberries and pillows of mashed potato. *smaka.se*

2 SEAFOOD
The waters off the Bohuslän Coast are home to prawns, oysters, langoustines, lobsters and mussels. Enjoy in any of the top-notch restaurants or try a seafood safari. *westsweden.com/seafood-safaris*

3 CHEESE
Swedish cheeses aren't nearly as famous as they should be. Falbygdens Osteria in Falköping is a family-owned business offering 160 varieties of cheese, including 'whisky cheddar'. *falbygdensosteria.se*

IMAGES: AMPLIFYPHOTO-MARKUS HOLM; ULF SVANE; MADELEINE LANDLEY

GOTHENBURG

Sweden's second-largest city is an underrated gem. With its neoclassical architecture, bars, cafes and canals, it offers the perfect city break

WORDS: SARAH BARRELL

It may not have Stockholm's Hanseatic hauteur, but Gothenburg's blithe, briny spirit shines through its wonderfully eclectic patchwork of architecture. This is a city that refuses to be buttoned up or pinned down, from its industrial docks reinvented as arts spaces to the elegant Parisian-style boulevards around Avenyn and the cobbled streets of Haga lined with brick and half-timbered houses. Here, industry effortlessly meets artistry, locally born denim and fashion labels thrive, cold-press coffee infiltrates the traditional fika break, and street art blooms city-wide.

A working port and the vestiges of the vast Volvo plant underpin Gothenburg's industrial reality, but this is a green, serene place encircled by parks, where arterial rivers and canals breathe life into the urban hum. So even if you don't use Gothenburg as a gateway to the west coast's extensive archipelagos, there's paddling, hiking and biking aplenty within its realms.

The bounty of the west coast's waters land on Gothenburg's tables daily, making everything from a classic *smørrebrød* (open-faced sandwich) to a lobster supper a regular treat. But this vibrant, student-led city doesn't stand on culinary ceremony. Come here for inventive seasonal bites served alongside local microbrews and street food that offer up Scandi precision with international flavours. Gothenburg's is a determinedly west coast breed of cool.

Haga Nygata in the Haga district, Gothenburg
LEFT: Harbour in Gothenburg
BELOW FROM LEFT: Seafood dishes; Nudie Jeans Repair Shop

See & do

Hop aboard tram #9, from downtown to Klippan, where former dockside salting houses and foundries are now home to cutting edge galleries like **RÖDA STEN**, a contemporary arts hub in a 1940s furnace station. *rodasten.com*

Make a beeline for the vast **GÖTEBORGS KONSTMUSEUM** to see the work of Tor Bjurström, a protege of Matisse, and whose students became known as the Gothenburg Colourists. *konstmuseum.goteborg.se*

Any exploration of Gothenburg should start from the water. Take a traditional Paddan boat at **KUNGSPORTSPLATSEN** (King's Gate) where the city was founded, for a 50-minute canal-river tour past old steamers, naval vessels and historic four-masted sailing ships. *stromma.se*

Make pilgrimage to **FESKEKÔRKA** ('fish church'), Gothenburg's gothic 19th-century fish market where iced stalls are topped with sit-down dining spots upstairs, including beloved fish restaurant, Gabriel. *feskekörka.se*

Gothenburg's industrialist, ship-building, car-manufacturing past can't be better understood than via an insightful — and brilliantly fun — guided tour in a cavalcade of vintage Volvos. *timetravelgbg.se/en*

HASSELBLAD CENTER: Gothenburg is the birthplace of the legendary medium-format camera that captured the 1969 moon landing. Its gallery in the **GOTHENBURG MUSEUM OF ART** shows exhibitions of pioneering international and Swedish photography. *hasselbladfoundation.org*

Like a local

STYR & STÄLL rental bikes are a handy way to get around town (if a bit hair-raising in frenetic tram traffic). Free for 30-minute rentals or less. *en.goteborgbikes.se*

Shrimp, oysters, crayfish, mussels and lobsters: **SWEDEN'S SEAFOOD BIG FIVE** means there's always something in season. If you can't make it out to the west coast for a seafood safari, don't fret — Gothenburg's tables are graced with seasonal seafood fare.

Coastal Gothenburg doesn't get snowbound like much of Sweden, but winters can be wet, icy and rainy. April-October is a great time to visit. July can be busy with holidaying Swedes, while June and August are full of long sunny days and white nights.

Buy

Pop in for 'fika' at the 19th-century **SALUHALLEN FOOD HALL**, and buy a souvenir wheel of *knackebrot* (savoury crackers) at family-run Steinbrenner & Nyberg.

NUDIE JEANS is a landmark sustainable brand launched by former Levi's designer Maria Erixon, complete with repair shop. Branches city-wide. *nudiejeans.com*

Head to **MAGASINSGATAN & VALLGATAN**; the city's design district is home to homegrown indie stars such as Velour, where a city-meets-sea aesthetic rules. *velourstore.com*

For freshly pressed coffee, vintage vinyl and a bowl of vegan broth, visit **CAFÉ SANTO DOMINGO** — one of the city's numerous indie record stores. *cafesantodomingo.se*

IMAGES: ALAMY; PER PIXEL PETERSON; TINA SAFREN; STUDIOGRAFEN

Wine Mechanics
RIGHT: Läckö Castle

Eat

LINDHOLMEN STREET FOOD MARKET: Saturdays see street food trucks and stalls selling platters of fish, burgers and creations from top city chefs at this market set in an old warehouse in the happening Science Park neighbourhood just north of the river. *lindholmenstreetfoodanddesignmarket.se*

CAFÉ HUSAREN: Wander the cobbled streets of Haga, lined with 17th-century red brick and clapboard houses. Gothenburg's oldest suburb is home to cool cafes, art studios and Café Husaren: the place to buy oversized *kanelbullar* (cinnamon buns). *cafehusaren.se*

WINE MECHANICS: An urban winery importing German and French grapes to make red, white and rose. The restaurant, set in a converted pigsty, offers sophisticated seasonal seafood dishes that almost always includes that Swedish staple: herring. *winemechanics.se*

FISKEKROGEN: No trip to Gothenburg is complete without tucking into some first-class seafood. Fiskekrogen is a must-visit, serving a huge variety of seafood in elegant, refined surroundings. Don't miss out on the shellfish plateau, a multitier tower of lobster, shrimp, crab, mussels and langoustines. *fiskekrogen.se*

Nightlife

BEER: Gothenburg is fast becoming the Nordic beer capital. In spring, Beer Week sees an impressive number of the city's 200+ breweries present their crafty creations, including brews by festival-founders, Dugges. Otherwise, Gamlestaden, the old meatpacking district north east of the city centre, is home to numerous microbreweries including Spike Brewery, whose newly opened tap room serves wood-fired pizzas. *gbgbeerweek.se spikebrewery.com*

LIVE MUSIC: Gothenburg has a surprisingly broad offering on its nightlife spectrum. Pustervik, which occupies an old theatre, showcases local, upcoming and international live acts, while Nefertiti is a legendary jazz club with regular hip-hop, blues and soul nights. The latter's stage has hosted some big names — both Swedish and international. *pustervik.nu nefertiti.se*

AMUSEMENT PARK: Late nights at Liseberg: Scandinavia's largest amusement park is not just for kids. The newly developed area for gigs and festival-style concerts comes alive in summer with open-air bars and, if you're game, next-gen rollercoasters like the Valkyria with its take-no-prisoners 164ft vertical drop. *liseberg.com*

OUTDOOR **ACTIVITIES**

GET PEDDLING
Mountain bike along the trails around Änggårdsbergen, a nature reserve that abuts the city's Botanical Garden and arboretum. Expect deeply wooded valleys, Bronze Age burial sites and views out to sea. *goteborg.com/en/anggardsbergen*

GET WALKING
This hiking path stretches between Gothenburg to Alingsås, with nine different segments adding up to 71km. There are plenty of train stops — as well as places to sleep, eat and enjoy some fika — along the way. *gotaleden.com/en*

GET WET
Or try not to, on a standup paddleboard or kayak trip along the river Säveån, the city's watery artery that winds east of the urban area into a realm of sea birds, beavers and densely wooded banks. *visitsweden.com/kayak-or-sup-along-river-savean*

ESSENTIALS

Need to know

The West Sweden region stretches from Gothenburg in the south to the Norwegian border in the north, from the strait of Skagerrak in the west, to the shores of one of Europe's three largest lakes and Sweden's biggest, Lake Vänern, in the east. West Sweden includes the city of Gothenburg and three provinces: coastal Bohuslän, Dalsland with its forests, lakes and rivers, and Västergötland.

Getting there & around

British Airways flies direct to Gothenburg from Heathrow, Norwegian from Gatwick, and Ryanair from Stansted and Manchester. *ba.com norwegian.com ryanair.com*
Average flight time: 2h30m.
Gothenburg Landvetter Airport is 15 miles east of the city, and is linked to the city's main bus terminal, Nils Ericson Terminal, as well as the main train station. *flygbussarna.se*
There's a fairly extensive public transport network servicing the entire region, but to get to the more off-the-beaten-track destinations you might need a car. For information on buses and trains in Gothenburg and West Sweden visit *vasttrafik.se/en* where you can also buy travel passes. The 24-hour and 72-hour passes are ideal for anyone who needs to do a lot of travelling in a short period of time, and are valid on trains, buses, trams and ferries.
Stockholm and Malmö are both approximately three hours away from Gothenburg by train. For information on trains going to other parts of Sweden, visit *sj.se*

More info

gothenburg.com
westsweden.com
visitsweden.com

IMAGES: ROGER BORGELID; TINA STAFREN

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING.

West Sweden is full of amazing places and mindblowing things to see and do. And best of all, there's always more to discover. So if you're thinking about coming to visit, check out our website. Start your journey now.

Photo: Lukasz Warzecha/westsweden.com

WEST SWEDEN.com